



In light of recent events, many people have concerns about their mail, or about suspicious substances that they may encounter in the home, the workplace or elsewhere.

Recognizing Suspicious Mail

Based on experience, postal inspectors have identified the following as warning signs:

- Excessive postage.
- No return address; unusual return address; mismatch between return address and city/state listed in postmark.
- Markings indicating that item was mailed from a foreign country.
- Handwritten or poorly typed addresses and misspellings of common words; incorrect title and/or no name for addressee.
- Markings like 'personal', 'confidential' or 'do not X-ray' which serve to restrict screening of mail.
- Threatening or otherwise unusual language on envelope/parcel or in contents.
- Unusual appearance, possibly including excessive use of string, tape or other materials to secure envelope or parcel; lopsided or uneven envelope; protruding wires or foil; oily stains, discoloration or unusual odors.
- Other unusual characteristics, including powdery substance on outside of envelope/parcel; powdery substance that can be felt when envelope/parcel is handled; excessive weight; ticking sounds.
- Unexpected mail from someone you do not know.
- Mail whose source cannot be verified.

Handling of Suspicious Mail

- If possible, leave suspicious item unopened. Do not attempt to show it to anyone else. Do not shake it or sniff it.
- Do not handle it more than necessary.
- Place item in plastic bag and seal, using a zip lock bag or tape. If possible, place first bag into a second bag and seal. (Exception: If item was opened and suspicious substance is found inside, and some of this material is spilled, do not attempt to clean it up. Simply leave it in place and follow rest of directions below.)
- Once item is secured, leave it in place and leave area.
- As a precaution, wash your hands with soap and water.
- Call U.S. Postal Inspection Service at 1-800-275-8777. They will assist in determining whether your situation involves a credible threat, and provide you with further instructions. If at work, notify appropriate staff, following procedures set up by your employer.